

there founded. There was her first visible head, the Lord himself; near Him stands the blessed Joseph, representing the princes of the church, who stand near the person of the sovereign pontiff, the vicar of Christ, to care for his personal welfare and that of his entire household. There are the shepherds coming to do homage to Him, presenting the lambs of their flocks, and then going out from His presence to proclaim to all the wonderful things they had learned there! They represent the bishops of the church who go at times to kneel at the feet of

THE BISHOP OF BISHOPS,

present to him testimonials of faith and affection from the flocks they are charged to watch over, and then go out from his presence to proclaim to all men the great truths and principles of justice and morality that drop from the lips of the infallible Vicar of Bethlehem's Babe King! The lambs brought hither by the shepherds represent all the faithful children of the church who are obedient to the voice of their pastors, and suffer themselves to be guided by them with all the docility and simplicity that is begotten of grace. Above all, silent and very near to the divine Infant, kneels His Immaculate Mother, "pondering all these things in her heart," and fittingly representing the highest order of saints in the church whose lives are spent in intimate communion with God!

There, too, are the kings from the East, representing the learning, wisdom, wealth and power of the world, and foreshadowing that all these shall in time bow to the supernatural power and wisdom of that kingdom which the new-born had come to establish. And very near to the Holy Child, as tradition tells us, are the simple beasts of burden, the ox and the ass, representing all the humble, downtrodden, labor-

burdened and poverty-stricken of the race He had come to lift up!

Scarcely had these things taken place when the war cloud threatens the King of Peace. The usurper, Herod, goaded on by ambition and avarice, seeks His life. It is saved by the interposition of a supernatural power. He is safely carried into exile, but a host of His adopted brothers are called upon to shed their blood and give their lives for Him, and the holy innocents are enrolled as the first champions of His cause on the battle-field which already promises to be a bloody one.

Now, glance over the annals of the Catholic Church since that memorable epoch in which the events we have enumerated took place, and you find the history of the childhood of Jesus repeated, period after period, during the nineteen centuries that have flowed down the stream of time since the day of His birth.

All classes of men, the highest and lowest, the richest and poorest, the strongest and weakest, the most learned and most illiterate, the Emperor and the slave, the philosopher and the ignorant—all in time have knelt at the feet of her Pontiffs, acknowledged her claims to spiritual supremacy and her authority as an infallible teacher! They have placed at her disposal their learning, wisdom, wealth—their very swords—so ardently were they devoted to her cause; and again, they have risen up against her, like Herod of old, they have robbed her; they have sought her life; they have shed the blood of her children in torrents, and driven her Pontiffs into exile and poverty over the way first trodden by the child Jesus! And this is no legend of the past. It has a reality in our own day and under our own observation. To-day the venerable head of the church, like Jesus at Bethlehem, is shut out from his own country and city, which had been given as an inheritance to his predecessors, but